equipment considered necessary for modernisation and cost reduction, etc.

Role of N. G. Os. in protecting the consumers

1833. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO : Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to encourage non-Governmental organisations to take a more prominent role in protecting the consumers;

(b) if so, the details of such efforts;

(c) whether N.G.Os. will be encouraged to play a more active role in Andhra Pradesh; and

(d) if so, the details thereof

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED) : (a) to (d) Government has taken a number of measures to encourage non-governmental organisations to play an effective role in protecting the consumers. These measures include amendment of various legislations such as prevention of Food Adulteration Act, etc., to empower registered consumer organisations to file complaints in the courts; grant of financial assistance; giving representation to non-governmental organisations on various Councils/Committees constituted to protect the interests of consumtrs institution of National awards for consumer organisation; prtnting of literature and its free distribution; publishing of quarterly journal "Upbhokta Jagaran" and its free distribution to consumer organisations; conducting of training programmes etc. These measures apply to non governmental organisations working in Andhra Pradesh also.

Expansion of PDS to Urban areas

1834. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state;

(a) whether Government propose to consider the expansion of the Public Distribution System to the poor living in the urban areas;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) steps taken to implement the new schemes in the urban areas for the poorer sections ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED) : (a) to (c) As per the present policy of the Central Government, coverage under the Public Distribution System (PDS) is universal in nature. All persons, including the poor living in the Urban areas are entitled to the benefits of the PDS. The Advisory Council on PDS had set up a Committee of Ministers from State Governments in Marrh, 1993, to formulate recommendations regarding a National Policy on PDS focussing on the need to allocate larger and more meaningful quantities to the really needy and deserving sections of society. The recommendations made by Committee of Ministers included a suggestion that at least 20 kgs. of foodgrains per family per month shoulid be made available to every family of the vulnerable population. The report of the Committee of Minister was considered by the Advisory Council on PDS in its meettng held in September, 1993. The Advisory Council on PDS was of the opinion that the matter required further consultation with State Governments through the forum of the National Development Council. Government has so far not taken any decision in the matter.

1835. [*Transferred to 16th March*, 1994.]

Probing the authenticity of claims by consumers in respect of consumer Products.

1836. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL : Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to take initiative in the interest of the consumers to probe into the authenticity of